

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for interfacing with device hardware supporting a plurality of devices included in the device hardware, comprising:

initializing a device interface driver to represent the device hardware as a virtual bus to an operating system and to represent to the operating system each device supported in the device hardware as a device attached to the virtual bus;

initializing the device hardware;

accessing the device hardware to determine the devices included in the device hardware;

generating one device object for each determined device in the device hardware, wherein each generated device object represents the determined device to the operating system;

reporting the determined devices to the operating system, wherein the operating system loads a device driver for each of the reported devices supported by the device hardware;

reporting to the operating system that the determined devices are dependent on the virtual bus, wherein in response to being notified that the determined devices and virtual bus are dependent, the operating system will not remove the device interface driver representing the virtual bus until the device drivers associated with the determined devices are removed; and[.]

reporting to the operating system that a power state of the virtual bus represented by the device interface driver cannot be altered until all the device drivers representing devices attached to the virtual bus have their power state similarly altered.

2-3. (Canceled)

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the hardware device comprises a network adaptor and wherein each device available in the network adaptor supports a protocol engine for different communication protocols.

5. (Original) The method of claim 4, wherein each protocol engine processes packets according to a communication protocol and a network protocol, wherein each transport engine supports a different communication protocol and uses a same network protocol.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
receiving a packet from one device driver;
determining a device queue in the device hardware queuing packets for the device supported by the device hardware corresponding to the device driver; and
writing the received packet to the determined queue.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
receiving notification from the device hardware concerning transmission of one packet;
determining the device driver for the device in the network adaptor that processed the packet; and
transmitting notification to the determined device driver indicating the notification received from the device hardware.

8. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
receiving indication of a packet provided by the device hardware;
determining the device driver for the device supported by the network adaptor that processed the provided packet;
invoking a call to cause the determined device driver to process the provided packet.

9. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein all the device drivers access devices supported by the device hardware through the device interface driver.

10. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the devices determined in the device hardware for which device objects are generated comprise less than all the devices included in the device hardware.

11. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

in response to detecting a change in the configuration of devices supported by the device hardware, signaling the operating system of the changed configuration of devices available in the device hardware, wherein the operating system is capable of loading or unloading device drivers to support the changed configuration of devices available in the device hardware.

12. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the operations of initializing the device hardware, accessing the device hardware to determine devices supported by the device hardware, generating the device objects, and reporting the determined devices to the operating system are performed by the device interface driver.

13. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein one device includes a protocol engine supporting the Internet Small Computer Interface (iSCSI) communication protocol and Transmission Control Protocol (TCP) communication protocol, wherein one device includes a protocol engine supporting an offloaded Local Area Network (LAN) communication protocol, and wherein one device includes a protocol engine supporting non-offloaded-LAN protocol.

14. (Previously Presented) A system, comprising:

a processor;

an operating system executed by the processor;

a network adaptor supporting a plurality of devices included in the network adaptor;

a device interface driver that represents the network adaptor as a virtual bus to the operating system, and that represents to the operating system each device supported in the device hardware as a device attached to the virtual bus, wherein the processor, when executing the device interface driver, is enabled to:

access the network adaptor to determine the devices included in by the network adaptor;

generate one device object for each determined device in the network adaptor, wherein each generated device object represents the determined device to the operating system;

report the determined devices to the operating system, wherein the operating system loads a device driver for each of the reported devices supported by the network adaptor, and wherein to the operating system each determined device is considered attached to the virtual bus;

report to the operating system that the determined devices are dependent on the virtual bus, wherein in response to being notified that the determined devices and virtual bus are dependent, the operating system will not remove the device interface driver representing the virtual bus until the device drivers associated with the determined devices are removed; and

report to the operating system that a power state of the virtual bus represented by the device interface driver cannot be altered until all the device drivers representing devices attached to the virtual bus have their power state similarly altered.

15-16. (Canceled)

17. (Original) The system of claim 14, wherein each device available in the network adaptor supports a protocol engine for different communication protocols.

18. (Original) The system of claim 17, wherein each protocol engine processes packets according to a communication protocol, wherein each protocol engine supports a different communication protocol and uses a same network protocol.

19. (Original) The system of claim 14, wherein the processor, when executing the device interface driver, is further enabled to:

receive a packet from one device driver;

determine a device queue in the network adaptor queuing packets for the device supported by the hardware device corresponding to the device driver; and

write the received packet to the determined queue.

20. (Original) The system of claim 14, wherein the processor, when executing the device interface driver, is further enabled to:

receive notification from the network adaptor concerning transmission of one packet;
determine the device driver for the device in the network adaptor that processed the
packet; and

transmit notification to the determined device driver indicating the notification received
from the device hardware.

21. (Original) The system of claim 14, wherein the processor, when executing the
device interface driver, is further enabled to:

receive indication of a packet provided by the network adaptor;
determine the device driver for the device supported by the network adaptor that
processed the provided packet;
invoke a call to cause the determined device driver to process the provided packet.

22. (Original) The system of claim 14, wherein all the device drivers access devices
supported by the network adaptor through the device interface driver.

23. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 14, wherein the devices determined in
the network adaptor for which device objects are generated comprise less than all the devices
included in the network adaptor.

24. (Original) The system of claim 14, wherein the processor, when executing the
device interface driver, is further enabled to:

signal the operating system of the changed configuration of devices available in the
device hardware in response to detecting a change in the configuration of devices supported by
the device hardware, wherein the operating system is capable of loading or unloading device
drivers to support the changed configuration of devices available in the device hardware.

25. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 14, wherein one device includes a
protocol engine supporting the Internet Small Computer Interface (iSCSI) communication
protocol and Transmission Control Protocol (TCP) communication protocol, wherein one device
includes a protocol engine supporting an offloaded Local Area Network (LAN) communication

protocol, and wherein one device includes a protocol engine supporting non-offloaded-LAN protocol.

26. (Currently Amended) A system in communication with a network, comprising:

- a processor;
- an operating system executed by the processor;
- a network adaptor supporting a plurality of devices included in the network adaptor;
- at least one physical interface included in the network adaptor enabling communication of packets between the devices and the network, wherein the at least one physical interface is capable of interfacing with copper wires[. . .];
- a device interface driver that represents the network adaptor as a virtual bus to the operating system, and that represents to the operating system each device supported in the device hardware as a device attached to the virtual bus, wherein the processor, when executing the device interface driver, is enabled to:

 - access the network adaptor to determine the devices included in the network adaptor;
 - generate one device object for each determined device in the network adaptor, wherein each generated device object represents the determined device to the operating system;
 - report the determined devices to the operating system, wherein the operating system loads a device driver for each of the reported devices supported by the network adaptor, and wherein to the operating system each determined device is considered attached to the virtual bus;[. . .]
 - report to the operating system that the determined devices are dependent on the virtual bus, wherein in response to being notified that the determined devices and virtual bus are dependent, the operating system will not remove the device interface driver representing the virtual bus until the device drivers associated with the determined devices are removed; and[. . .]
 - report to the operating system that a power state of the virtual bus represented by the device interface driver cannot be altered until all the device drivers representing devices attached to the virtual bus have their power state similarly altered.

27. (Canceled)

28. (Currently Amended) An article of manufacture comprising a computer readable storage medium including computer executable code for interfacing with device hardware supporting a plurality of devices included in the device hardware, wherein the code causes operations to be performed, the operations comprising:

initializing a device interface driver to represent the device hardware as a virtual bus to an operating system and to represent to the operating system each device supported in the device hardware as a device attached to the virtual bus;

initializing the device hardware;

accessing the device hardware to determine the devices included in the device hardware;

generating one device object for each determined device in the device hardware, wherein each generated device object represents the determined device to the operating system;

reporting the determined devices to the operating system, wherein the operating system loads a device driver for each of the reported devices supported by the device hardware;[[.]]

reporting to the operating system that the determined devices are dependent on the virtual bus, wherein in response to being notified that the determined devices and virtual bus are dependent, the operating system will not remove the device interface driver representing the virtual bus until the device drivers associated with the determined devices are removed; and

reporting to the operating system that a power state of the virtual bus represented by the device interface driver cannot be altered until all the device drivers representing devices attached to the virtual bus have their power state similarly altered.

29-30. (Canceled)

31. (Original) The article of manufacture of claim 28, wherein the hardware device comprises a network adaptor and wherein each device available in the network adaptor supports a protocol engine for different communication protocols.

32. (Original) The article of manufacture of claim 31,, wherein each protocol engine processes packets according to a communication protocol and a network protocol, wherein each transport engine supports a different communication protocol and uses a same network protocol.

33. (Original) The article of manufacture of claim 28, wherein the operations further comprise:

- receiving a packet from one device driver;
- determining a device queue in the device hardware queuing packets for the device supported by the device hardware corresponding to the device driver; and
- writing the received packet to the determined queue.

34. (Original) The article of manufacture of claim 28, wherein the operations further comprise:

- receiving notification from the device hardware concerning transmission of one packet;
- determining the device driver for the device in the network adaptor that processed the packet; and
- transmitting notification to the determined device driver indicating the notification received from the device hardware.

35. (Original) The article of manufacture of claim 28, wherein the operations further comprise:

- receiving indication of a packet provided by the device hardware;
- determining the device driver for the device supported by the network adaptor that processed the provided packet;
- invoking a call to cause the determined device driver to process the provided packet.

36. (Original) The article of manufacture of claim 28, wherein all the device drivers access devices supported by the device hardware through the device interface driver.

37. (Previously Presented) The article of manufacture of claim 28, wherein the devices determined in the device hardware for which device objects are generated comprise less than all the devices included in the device hardware.

38. (Original) The article of manufacture of claim 28, wherein the operations further comprise:

in response to detecting a change in the configuration of devices supported by the device hardware, signaling the operating system of the changed configuration of devices available in the device hardware, wherein the operating system is capable of loading or unloading device drivers to support the changed configuration of devices available in the device hardware.

39. (Original) The article of manufacture of claim 28, wherein the operations of initializing the device hardware, accessing the device hardware to determine devices supported by the device hardware, generating the device objects, and reporting the determined devices to the operating system are performed by the device interface driver.

40. (Previously Presented) The article of manufacture of claim 28, wherein one device includes a protocol engine supporting the Internet Small Computer Interface (iSCSI) communication protocol and Transmission Control Protocol (TCP) communication protocol, wherein one device includes a protocol engine supporting an offloaded Local Area Network (LAN) communication protocol, and wherein one device includes a protocol engine supporting non-offloaded-LAN protocol.